DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 284 488 HE 020 566

AUTHOR Roddy, Mary Ellen; And Others
TITLE Qualifications and Productivity of Nontenure-Track Faculty.
PUB DATE Apr 87
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Washington, DC, April 20-25, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Rank (Professional); Comparative Analysis; Higher Education; *Nontenured Faculty; *Personnel Policy; *Productivity; *Teacher Qualifications; Teacher Responsibility; Teacher Salaries; Teaching Conditions; Teaching Experience; *Tenured Faculty; Work Environment

ABSTRACT

The academic qualifications, experience, and productivity of nontenure-track and tenured/tenure-track full-time and part-time faculty at a state university are compared, based on the results of a 1985 study. Recommendations concerning working conditions and policy for nontenure-track faculty are also offered. Findings include: almost 87% of tenured/tenure-track faculty had earned doctorates, compared to about 32% of nontenure-track faculty; the average years of academic experience accrued by tenured/tenure-track faculty was 15.4 years, compared to 11.1 years for the nontenured-track faculty; the nontenured/tenure-track faculty clustered in the lower ranks of instructor and assistant professor, while tenured/tenure-track faculty clustered in the upper ranks of associate and full professor; the majority of nontenured-track faculty carried out extra classroom activities, such as preparing instructional materials; and the number of submitted and funded proposals written by the tenured and nontenured faculty groups did not significantly differ. Recommendations include: the university should provide a supportive academic environment and equitable salaries for nontenure-track faculty. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED284488

QUALIFICATIONS AND PRODUCTIVITY OF NONTENURE-TRACK FACULTY

by

Mary Ellen Roddy
New Mexico State University

and

Timothy J. Pettibone
University of Tennessee - Knoxville

and

Gregory P. Maltby
New Mexico State University

A Paper for Presentation at the 1987 Annual Meeting
American Educational Research Association

Washington D.C.
April 20-25, 1987

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Mary Ellen Roddy

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

HE 020 586

Qualifications and Productivity
of Nontenure-Track Faculty

INTRODUCTION

During the last decade, many postsecondary institutions have employed substantially greater numbers of nontenure-track faculty. Their steady growth has been justified by the financial and curricular flexibility they provide an institution. Recruiting tenure-ineligible faculty is thought to give an institution the resilience to survive in times of inflation, scarce resources, and changing student preferences in terms of academic programs (Gappa, 1984a; Gappa, 1984b; Leslie, Kellams, & Gunne, 1982).

The issue of nontenure-track faculty employment is a controversial one. It is often assumed that noncontract faculty lack the academic credentials and experience of their tenured/tenure-track colleagues and perform less than the full array of functions inherent in a "regular" faculty appointment. Despite the fact the rising market for nontenure-track faculty has been documented, relatively few postsecondary institutions have systematically studied the characteristics, qualifications and job responsibilities of their nontenure-track faculty sector.

A case study was conducted to delineate a profile of nontenure-track faculty at a state university (Roddy, 1986). Comparisons were made with tenured/tenure-track faculty to provide a reference point. The study focused on the differences between these faculty groups regarding the following variables: demographic factors, such as gender; academic credential or highest degree held; years of academic experience; academic rank; compensation; and academic responsibilities including teaching, research and service.

Specifically, this presentation will describe some of the results regarding the academic qualifications, experience and productivity of nontenure-track faculty in comparison to their tenured/tenure-track colleagues. Recommendations for faculty policies based on these findings will be discussed.

For the purpose of this investigation, the term nontenure-track faculty referred to individuals employed in noncontract faculty positions, regardless of full-time equivalent (FTE) load. That is, the target population under study included both part-time and full-time nontenure-track faculty.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Stucturalist perspective of organizational theory discussed by Etzioni (1964) and the ideas of social conflict proposed by

Coser (1956) and McCarthy (1980) served as a conceptual framework for this study. In theory, organizational conflict is inevitable because the organization's quest for rationality is often incompatible with man's need for personal fulfillment. However, organizational conflict serves a social function in that, if properly managed, it can be growth-engendering by enabling both the institution and the individual to adapt to changing circumstances.

In academia, the university's quest to carry out its mission while remaining financially solvent may conflict with the rights, privileges, and economic welfare of individual faculty members. How the university deals with the conflict will determine whether the expanding nontenure-track faculty sector is functional or dysfunctional to the institution. By examining the prevalent issues and articulating legitimate and equitable policies based on factual data, institutions will ensure that the growing use of nontenure-track faculty contributes to rather than detracts from the quality of its educational programs.

RESEARCH DESIGN and METHODOLOGY

The intention of this investigation was to describe nontenure-track faculty on the main campus at a comprehensive, doctoral level institution, using tenured/tenure-track faculty as a reference group. Two means of data collection were utilized: a survey of records and a survey on nontenure-track faculty through questionnaire.

The university's computerized record-keeping system was used to acquire data about all faculty members in order to compare the characteristics of faculty classified in nontenure-track contract status with faculty classified in tenured/tenure-track contract status. Manual files were used to collect additional data regarding productivity variables.

Some essential information about nontenure-track faculty was not available in the records and was gathered via questionnaire. One of the major purposes of the survey instrument was to ascertain whether the terms and conditions of nontenure-track faculty employment included the performance of certain academic activities commonly associated with tenure-eligible appointments. These responsibilities included the teaching functions of student advising and curriculum development; research, grant proposal writing, publications; and service activities.

FINDINGS

Fall semester, 1985, nontenure-track faculty represented 35 percent of the total faculty headcount and approximately 25 percent of the total FTE on the main campus. Noncontract faculty comprised 21 percent of all full-time faculty positions. This is somewhat more than the average 17.6 percent reported by Mortimer, Bagshaw and Masland (1985) to be employed full-time in doctorate granting institutions.

Academic Credential and Experience

Approximately 92 percent of the faculty, regardless of contract status, have earned the advanced degrees of a master's or doctorate. However, the results indicate that nontenure-track faculty lag behind their tenured/tenure-track colleagues with respect to academic qualifications and experience.

Table 1 illustrates the distribution of academic degrees earned by main campus faculty. Whereas nearly 87 percent of the tenured/tenure-track faculty have earned doctorates, only about 32 percent of the nontenure-track faculty have achieved this formal educational level.

Similarly, the average years of academic experience accrued by nontenure-track faculty was 11.1 years in contrast to 15.4 years by tenured/tenure-track faculty. The difference was significant at the .01 level ($t = -5.5$). Nontenure-track faculty were also more varied in terms of this variable.

Rank

Not surprisingly, the data provided sufficient evidence to suggest that rank status is a function of tenure status. While nontenure-track faculty cluster in the lower ranks of instructor and assistant professor, the tenured/tenure-track faculty congregate in the upper ranks of associate and full professor (Table 2).

Furthermore, the data supported the findings of Tuckman and Tuckman (1981) that nontenure-track faculty are relegated to lower ranks in spite of the fact many have earned advanced degrees and accrued the experience commensurate with higher rank positions. Rank remained significantly related to tenure status for faculty possessing similar academic credentials and experience. That is, nontenure-track faculty possessing a master's of doctorate degree were more likely to be of lower rank status than their tenured/tenure-eligible counterparts with the same credentials.

Salary

Regression analysis indicated tenure status, as well as rank, academic college affiliation, academic credentials and experience to be significant determinants of salary. Gender and age were insignificant (Table 3)

Productivity

Contrary to the common assumption that nontenure-track faculty "teach and run", a surprising large number were found to be bona-fide, productive members of the academic community, discharging many of the teaching, research and service functions traditionally associated with tenure-eligible

appointments. The majority of nontenure-track faculty were responsible for carrying out extra classroom activities such as preparing instructional materials (73.3%), keeping office hours (87.6%), and participating in curriculum development activities (60.8%). Approximately one third of the instructional faculty claimed to be involved with student advisement.

Nearly 30 percent of the nontenure-track faculty claimed they were responsible for proposal development. Relatively more nontenure-track faculty were involved in the professional activities of publishing and presenting papers. While 37 percent had published an article in a professional journal, 43 percent had presented papers at professional meetings.

A small minority of nontenure track faculty served on college-wide committees. Only 11 percent claimed they serve the institution in this manner.

The research and professional activities performed by nontenure - track faculty were cross-tabulated with their highest degree. Table 4 shows that faculty with advanced degrees were more likely to write proposals, publish present professional papers and serve on committees than were their counterparts with fewer academic credentials.

College of Education Study

Additional measures of research productivity were collected from the College of Education (COE) faculty. The number of submitted and funded proposals written by nontenure-track faculty was not significantly different from the number written by their tenured/tenure-track colleagues. They did, however write, significantly fewer articles for publication and presented fewer papers at professional meetings.

Although the mean hourly salary earned by COE nontenure-track faculty was found to be significantly lower than the hourly salary earned by tenured/tenure-eligible faculty, multiple linear regression techniques refuted the hypothesis that contract status was a significant determinant of salary given the qualification variables high degree and years of experience were already in the model. Productivity variables also did not contribute significantly to salary variation.

CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the obligation of any university to provide high quality academic programs. The university is a complex organization dedicated to teaching, research and service. In an effort to offset declining growth rates and resource squeezes, many universities have increased their use of nontenure-track faculty to carry out their institutional mission.

While the results of this study do not provide all the definitive answers regarding the employment practices of nontenure-track

faculty, they do provide some insights into their characteristics, qualifications and job responsibilities in comparison to their tenured/tenure-track colleagues. Accurate data is a prerequisite in the development of supportive faculty policies that facilitate the educational process.

In its quest to develop equitable policies, the institution must weigh it academic and financial needs with the demands of nontenure-track faculty to be rewarded at a level commensurate with their qualifications and contributions to the university. Thus, flexible policies are needed which acknowledge the variations among nontenure-track faculty, while maintaining the financial solvency of the institution.

Policies Reflecting the Diversity of Nontenure Track Faculty

Findings in this study indicated that a significant number of noncontract faculty were highly qualified for their positions. Almost one-third of the nontenure-track faculty had earned advanced degrees comparable to their tenured/tenure-track colleagues. These scholars possess the academic credentials commensurate with an "regular" academic position. Additionally, nontenure-track faculty holding doctorates are highly likely to be discharging duties similar to those discharged by their tenured/tenure-track counterparts. The fact that a proportion of the nontenure-track sector is highly credentialed and they carry out teaching, research and service activities indicates that they can be utilized to enhance rather than undermine educational programs.

On the other hand, it also places the university in a legally precarious position. Hiring nontenure-track faculty who are fully qualified for a regular faculty position, and encouraging them to carry out the full range of tenure-track faculty responsibilities might lead some of these individuals to claim they are entitled to tenure rights.

According to Head (1979) and Leslie et al. (1982) if a case were adjudicated, the courts will likely judge the merits of a claim to procedurally protected contract status on the nontenure-track faculty member's length and continuity of service as well as a determination whether his job description can be differentiated from the functions required of "regular" faculty. Therefore, those nontenure-track faculty who work full-time year after year, discharging the same duties as their tenured colleagues may be accruing *de facto* tenure. Even though the administration might not expect "continuity of service", the nontenure track faculty member may develop and "expectancy of employment" when he is a long-term, bona fide member of the academic community.

Concurring with the recommendation issued by the American Association of University Professors (Stern, Chaper, Gray and Wolfson, 1981), nontenure-track faculty who resemble tenure-eligible faculty in terms of their academic qualifications, the

academic functions they perform, and in their commitment to the institution should be granted all the rights, privileges and job security afforded tenure-eligible faculty. In addition they should be required to fulfill the obligations inherent in a tenure-track position.

However, there is great concern about the working conditions and minimal job security of the much larger class of nontenure-track faculty who lack the requisite qualifications of a full-fledged academic appointment and who perform job responsibilities more limited in scope. The institution's need to employ this kind of faculty member should be predetermined and thus able to be forecasted term after term. It only reasonable that upon initial appointment the university would carefully screen the credentials of these individuals. Thereafter, it is necessary to provide them with a supportive academic environment and periodically review their performance.

Nontenure-track faculty for whom the university can reasonably predict the need for their continuing services in the future should be given prorated fringe benefits based on their FTE load, and encouraged to become integrated into the academic mainstream. Although it is neither reasonable nor desirable to confer tenure upon these individuals, their employment document should clearly specify the conditions of employment and spell out the degree of job security to which they are entitled. It seems reasonable that they should be given access to a grievance procedure on the same level as is available to professional staff.

Another group of nontenure-track should be classified as a temporary labor force hired to work on an occasional basis to meet unexpected demands. As these individuals are only loosely attached to the university their employment document should strictly limit any future commitment on the part of the institution and spell out any rights to which this nontenure-track faculty member is entitled.

Recommendations Regarding Equitable Compensation

Equitable Salaries: Nontenure-track faculty should be compensated on the basis of their qualifications, job descriptions and productivity. Although parity with tenured/tenure-eligible faculty is not necessary, wages should be equitable.

The term "equitable" does not mean prorated wages. It is entirely reasonable that noncontract faculty be paid less than their tenured/tenure-track colleagues, especially when they do not perform the full range of academic functions. However noncontract faculty who are given extra responsibilities should be justly compensated for their efforts. Furthermore, the compensation structure should provide noncontract faculty with an incentive to keep professionally current and improve their academic skills.

Salary analyses at the case study institution confirmed Allard's (1984) contention that salary is significantly related to rank status. This study also supported the Tuckman and Tuckman (1981) finding that nontenure-track faculty are often displaced in lower academic ranks despite their having earned advanced degrees and accrued the experience commensurate with higher ranked positions. As a result, locally as well as nationally, many nontenure-track faculty enjoy only marginal status in the academic community and are underpaid for their services.

Institutional Support: Institutional support was viewed by Gappa (1984b), Leslie et al.(1982), and Tuckman and Vogler (1978) as another component of a faculty member's compensation package. The institution has the responsibility to provide faculty with a supportive environment in which to professionally grow and develop. Extending this mandate to nontenure track faculty would probably enhance their sense of belonging to the institution and ultimately have a positive effect on the educational process.

Support in the form of providing nontenure-track faculty with the basic resources needed to carry out their academic responsibilities is essential. The case study institution did very well in this regard. Support services including office space, mailboxes, and secretarial help were available to over 80 percent of the survey respondents. This is markedly higher that the 57 percent reported by Tuckman and Vogler (1978) to be receiving such services.

In conclusion, this study sheds doubt on the notion that the growing use of nontenure track faculty will necessary dilute the quality of the academic enterprise. By examining the characteristics and qualification of their nontenure track faculty, institutions of higher education can develop equitable policies that are mutually beneficial to both the institution and the nontenure-track faculty member. Legitimate and equitable policies will create a harmonious academic environment conducive to quality education.

Recommendations stemming from this study emphasize the need for flexible institutional policies which accommodate the wide variance of characteristics observed among nontenure-track faculty. Employment policies should reflect the qualifications nontenure-track faculty bring to their jobs as well as their contribution to the institution. Most importantly, any employment agreement with nontenure track faculty should be based on sound legal principles, with the contractual obligations of both the nontenure track faculty member and the institution clearly specified.

References

Allard, C.A. (1984, Fall). Assessing faculty salary equity. The Association for Institutional Research Professional File, (20), 1-7.

Coser, L. (1956). The function of social conflict. New York: Free Press.

Etzioni, A. (1964). Modern Organizations. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Gappa, J.M. (1984a). Employing part-time faculty: Thoughtful approaches to continuing problems. AAHE Bulletin, 37(2), 3-7.

Gappa, J.M. (1984b). Part-time faculty: Higher education at a crossroads (ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Research Report No.3). Washington, D.C.: Association for the Study of Higher Education.

Head, R.B. (1979). Legal issues relating-to part-time faculty employment. (Occasional Paper No. 6) Charlottesville, VA: Virginia University, Center for Higher Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 174 060).

Leslie, D.W., Kellams, S.E., & Gunne, G.M. (1982). Part-time faculty in American higher education. New York, Praeger.

McCarthy, J.E. (1980). Conflict and mediation in the academy. In J.E. McCarthy (Ed.), Resolving conflict in higher education: New directions for higher education (pp.1-9). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass Inc.

Mortimer, K.P., Bagshaw, M., & Masland, A.T. (1985). Flexibility in academic staffing: Effective policies and practices. (ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 1). Washington, D.C.: Association for the Study of Higher Education.

Roddy, Mary Ellen. (1986). The status of nontenure-track faculty at New Mexico State University. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Stern, C.S., Chaper, J.H., Gray, M.W. & Wolfson, R.J. (1981). The status of part-time faculty. Academe: Bulletin of AAUP, 67(1), 29-39.

Tuckman, H.P., & Tuckman, B.H. (1981). Who are part-timers and what are colleges doing for them? (Current Issues in Higher Education): Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 213 326)

Tuckman, H.P., & Vogler, W.D. (1978). The "part" in part-time part-time faculty. AAUP Bulletin, 64(2), 70-77.

TABLES

Table 1

Distribution of Academic Degree by Contract Status (N=733)

Academic Degree	Nontenure Track (%) N=260	Tenured/ Tenure-track (%) N=473
No degree	6 (2.3%)	0 (0)
Associate	1 (0.4%)	0 (0)
Bachelors	50 (19.2%)	2 (0.4%)
Masters	121 (46.5%)	60 (12.7%)
Doctorate	82 (31.5%)	411 (86.9%)

Table 2

Rank Distribution by Contract Status (N=733)

Academic Rank	Nontenure Track (%) N=260	Tenured/ Tenure-track (%) N=473
Instructor	138 (53.1%)	5 (1.1%)
Assistant Professor	94 (36.2%)	115 (24.3%)
Associate Professor	13 (5.0%)	158 (33.4%)
Professor	15 (5.8%)	195 (41.2%)

Table 3

Partial Sums of Squares and Associated F Value for Independent Variables in Regression on Hourly Salary (N=722)

Independent Variables	Partial Sums	df	F	Overall F	R^2
Gender	32.4	1	2.88		
High degree	243.8	3	7.22*		
College of Employment	714.0	5	12.69*		
Rank	2624.2	3	77.76*		
Graduate of Institution	35.7	1	3.18		
Contract Status	102.9	1	9.15*		
Age	4.6	1	0.41		
Experience	191.4	1	17.02*		
				108.9	.71

* indicates .01 level of significance

Table 4

Distribution of Nontenure-Track Faculty Who Perform Research and Service-Related Activities

	Proposals N=76	Papers N=114	Publications N=99	Committees N=28
High Degree				
Bachelors	8 (10.5%)	11 (9.6%)	4 (4.0%)	4 (14.3%)
Masters	20 (26.3%)	46 (40.4%)	39 (39.4%)	11 (39.3%)
Doctorate	48 (63.2%)	57 (50.0%)	56 (56.6%)	13 (46.4%)